

- -Listing of Claims - -

Claim 1 (Currently amended).

A system for facilitating coupling pipes at their ends in substantially fluid – tight relationship comprising:

- (1) Clamping means for clamping around said pipe ends
said clamping means including at least one screwhole for receiving at least one screw for fastening, by securing at least one nut thereon, said clamping means over gasket means and said pipe ends , said at least one screw being configured such that it is loosely disposed in said at least one screw hole of said clamping means prior to fastening of said clamping means around said pipe ends;
- (2) gasket means for interposition between said clamping means and said pipe ends; and
- (3) resilient retention means, resiliently engageable with said at least one screw, for loosely retaining said at least one screw in said at least one screw hole while said at least one screw is loosely disposed in said at least one screw hole prior to fastening said clamping means together by securing said at least one nut with said at least one screw, said resilient retention means being resiliently positionable from the side of the shank and from the front of the shank of said at least one screw into engagement with said at least one screw to loosely

retain said at least one screw in said screw hole prior to fastening said clamping means together by securing said at least one nut with said at least one screw.

Claim 2. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 1 wherein said retention means is ~~frictionally~~ resiliently engageable with said at least one screw by placement between threads thereof to provide said retention.

Claim 3. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 1 wherein said resilient retention means is resiliently positionable on the end of the shank of said at least one screw for ~~frictional~~ resilient engagement therewith.

Claim 4. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 1 wherein said resilient retention means comprises a member composed of resilient material.

Claim 5. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said resilient retention means is thin relative to the length of said at least one screw.

Claim 6. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said resilient retention means is composed of resilient metal.

Claim 7. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said resilient retention means defines at least one internal opening for being positioned onto said at least one screw from the end of the shank thereof.

Claim 8. (Currently amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said resilient retention means defines at least one lateral opening having

two separate ends for sideways resilient positioning of said retention means upon the shank of said at least one screw by resiliently displacing from each other said two ends of said at least one lateral opening to accommodate said at least one screw.

Claim 9. (Currently amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said resilient retention means has a generally circular configuration.

Claim 10. (Currently amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said resilient retention means has a generally square configuration.

Claim 11. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 7 wherein said at least one internal opening is substantially polygonal.

Claim 12. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 2 wherein said resilient retention means includes adhesive means for adhesion to said at least one screw.

Claim 13. (Currently amended). In a pipe coupling system for coupling pipe ends in substantially fluid – tight relationship including gasket means positionable on said pipe ends and clamping means fastenable on said pipe ends and said gasket means, said clamping means being fastenable by securing at least one nut on ~~said~~ at least one screw insertable through at least one screw hole in said clamping means, said at least one screw being loosely disposed in said at least one screw hole prior to securing of said at least one screw by said at least one nut, the improvement comprising:

resilient retention means for loosely retaining said at least one screw in place when loosely disposed in said at least one screw hole ~~inserted~~ in said clamping means and prior to fastening of said clamping means by securing said at least one nut on said at least one screw, said resilient retention means being resiliently positionable from the side of the shank of said at least one screw into retention engagement to loosely retain said at least one screw in said at least one screw hole.

Claim 14. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means is ~~frictionally~~ resiliently engageable with said at least one screw.

Claim 15. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means is resiliently positionable at the end of the shank of said at least one screw for ~~frictional~~ resilient engagement therewith.

Claim 16. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means comprises a member composed of resilient material.

Claim 17. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means is thin relative to the length of said at least one screw.

Claim 18. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means is composed of resilient metal.

- Claim 19. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means defines at least one internal opening for being placed onto said at least one screw from the end of the shank thereof.
- Claim 20. (Currently amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said retention means defines at least one lateral opening having two separate ends for resilient sidewise placing of said resilient retention means upon the shank of said at least one screw by displacing said two separate ends from each other to accommodate said at least one screw.
- Claim 21. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means has a generally circular configuration.
- Claim 22. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means has a generally square configuration.
- Claim 23. (Original). The invention as set forth in Claim 19 wherein at least one internal opening is substantially polygonal.
- Claim 24. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means include adhesive means for adhesion to said at least one screw.
- Claim 25. (Currently Amended). The invention as set forth in Claim 13 wherein said resilient retention means is positionable upon said at least one screw from the side of the shank thereof for ~~frictional~~ resilient engagement between threads of said at least one screw therewith.

Claim 26 (Currently amended). A method for facilitating coupling at least two conduits at their ends in substantially fluid-tight relationship comprising the steps of:

- (1) providing gasket means for disposition upon said at least two conduits;
- (2) providing clamping means for clamping around said conduit ends and including at least one screw hole for receiving at least one screw for fastening said clamping means upon said gasket means and said conduit ends in substantially fluid-tight relationship by securing at least one nut to said at least one screw;
- (3) placing said at least one screw loosely in said at least one screw hole prior to securing said at least one nut to said at least one screw; and
- (4) disposing resilient retention means laterally upon the side of the shank of or upon the front of said at least one screw to prevent said at least one screw from exiting said at least one screw hole prior to said fastening of said clamping means and said gasket means.

Claim 27. (Currently Amended). The method as set forth in Claim 26 wherein said resilient retention means is ~~frictionally~~ resiliently engageable with said at least one screw to accomplish retention thereof.

Claim 28. (Original). The method of Claim 26 further including the step of fastening said gasket means and said clamping means onto said conduit

ends by tightening said at least one screw until substantially fluid-tight relationship is achieved between said conduits.

Claim 29. (Original).

The method of Claim 26 wherein said conduits comprise pipes.